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THE THEOLOGY OF CHARLES CARROLL EVERETT¹

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It is related that Dr. Everett was once asked by the professor of systematics in another institution what subjects he found it possible to discuss in a non-denominational school of theology. The question was a silly one, for it assumed that in such a school no teacher gives utterance to the particular views which determine his own denominational affiliations, whereas, in Harvard at any rate, each instructor expresses without hesitation or reserve his entire thought, not seeking to present a composite picture but trusting that his instruction will blend with that of his colleagues to impress upon the minds of his students, whatever distinctive features they may finally adopt, the deep common lines of Christian faith. Characteristically, however, Dr. Everett did not point out the false presupposition of the question, but mentioned some of the principal topics considered in his lectures,—the nature of religion, the thought of God as Absolute Spirit, and the like,—to which the inquirer replied in some surprise, Why, we take all those things for granted. Dr. Everett answered mildly, I wish we could. It was a thoroughly charac-

¹ The more important of Dr. Everett's books are: *The Science of Thought*. Boston, William V. Spencer, 1869. Revised edition: Boston, De Wolfe, Fiske & Co., 1890. *Fichte's Science of Knowledge*. Chicago, S. C. Griggs & Co., 1884. *Poetry, Comedy, and Duty*. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1888. *The Gospel of Paul*. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1893. *Essays Theological and Literary*. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1901. *The Psychological Elements of Religious Faith*, edited by Edward Hale. New York, Macmillan, 1902. *Theism and the Christian Faith*, edited by Edward Hale. New York, Macmillan, 1909.

teristic remark not only because of the humor of its gentle rebuke, so gentle that probably the victim did not realize that his head was off, but also on account of its utter fidelity to his own theory and practice. He did not take fundamental things for granted; hence it was that while students in other theological schools were articulating a body of divinity, Dr. Everett's pupils were searching into the deep things of the spirit. For he was, first of all, a philosopher whose religious nature made him a theologian. The twenty-fifth chapter, of the thirty-five which make up the recently published volume upon *Theism and the Christian Faith*, begins with the words, "It may seem as though we were only now beginning our examination of the content of Christian faith." Doubtless it would have seemed so to most of his contemporaries in theological chairs, but it was precisely in the relation between the Christian faith, as he conceived it, and the profound metaphysics of the preceding chapters, that Dr. Everett found the supreme worth of Christianity and the assurance of its absoluteness. The heart of a worshipper made the mind of a philosopher that of a Christian theologian.

This distinction appears likewise in the method of his work. He offered no array of proof-texts. Occasionally, indeed, he cited a passage from Scripture, but always by way of illustration and never, I think, as decisive argument. It is true that in his little book *The Gospel of Paul* he entered the realm of New Testament interpretation, but the theological aspect of the book is more valuable than the exegetical. Of some old-time preacher the story is told that his hearers once exclaimed, "He is preaching the Bible, for, see, he has it in his hand all the time." From such a point of view Dr. Everett's theology would not be deemed Biblical, and yet it actually was, in the sense that he thought and lived in the world of the spirit where the Bible took its rise. In a word, his theological method is that of the philosopher and not that of a Biblical exegete.

It is not at all improbable that readers of Dr. Everett's earlier volume of lectures will feel that in the later one there has been a change in orientation. Those who listened to the lectures in the class-room sometimes had, at first, a similar feeling. There seemed to be a transition from the world of Schleiermacher to that

of Hegel. Of the former he said: "No writer has had more influence on modern theological thought. He is one of the pillars of Hercules, with Hegel the other, that mark the entrance through which one passes into modern theology" (*Psychological Elements of Religious Faith*, p. 60), but it seemed as if the two courses hugged opposite shores. In the first, religion was defined as consisting primarily in feeling: it is true that in the description of the religious feeling Dr. Everett parted company with Schleiermacher, defining the feeling not as one of absolute dependence but as feeling first towards a supernatural presence, and then towards a supernatural presence manifesting itself not only in truth but also in goodness and beauty; nevertheless the general impression made was like that of Schleiermacher. But in the lectures on Theism and the Content of Christian Faith, a student was introduced at the outset into the Hegelian world. The plan of the course showed the characteristic division: first, ideal affirmation; then the moment of difference, with a distinction between the creator and the creature, which rises to a negation of the ideal of unity in freedom, and to actual antagonism in sin and evil considered as negations of the ideals of goodness and beauty respectively; and finally, the stage of reconciliation in a higher synthesis, with discussions of retribution, forgiveness, and atonement. In conclusion, Christianity was presented as the Absolute Religion because exemplifying this higher synthesis in its purest and noblest form. Moreover, the three ideas themselves were treated as examples of the dialectic: truth is that which is; goodness, that which ought to be; beauty, that which is as it ought to be.² And not merely in the great lines of the course, and in the concept of God as Absolute Spirit manifesting itself in the dialectic process, but also in the several and specific discussions, Hegel was everlastingly in evidence. It seemed a remarkable change from immediacy of feeling to reason with its dialectic, and students were occasionally somewhat bewildered by the transition. The difficulty is removed, however, neither by recognition that Schleiermacher sometimes hegelianizes, although that is true, nor by pointing out, as Dr. Royce once did, that the Hegelianism is more in form than in substance, but by the per-

² The *Psychological Elements of Religious Faith*, p. 200.

ception that with Dr. Everett feeling and reason are virtually identical. The religious feeling is that awakened by a supernatural presence manifesting itself in truth, goodness, and beauty, which are the three ideas inherent in reason. This point is so important, for a just appreciation of Dr. Everett's theology, that it must be brought out more plainly, and his practical identification of reason and feeling will become evident if we consider what he means by each of the terms.

If religion consists in feeling, Dr. Everett asks,³ shall we say that religion exists to make a man feel good or to make a man of good feeling? Manifestly, the answer is not in doubt, but the distinction marks an important and significant difference. An eminent physician once said with reference to a case presented to him for diagnosis, "I guess that the fundamental trouble is thus and so,—but of course you understand that this is a scientific guess." Now the difference between a superficial and a scientific guess is that the latter is the guess of a disciplined mind, trained in the realm in which the guess is made. The Yankee has often been derided for his much guessing, but his guesses have opened the way of advance just because it was a Yankee that was doing the guessing, and acting upon his guesses. The distinction is akin to that which Dr. Everett himself draws between fancy and imagination: ⁴ fancy is the dreaming of an untrained child, imagination is the same power working in a disciplined and scientific mind. Fancy may lead astray, but imagination is humanity's pioneer. Hence, when Dr. Everett speaks of the imagination as the essential faculty of religion,⁵ and of religion as "poetry believed in," he is but putting in another way the thought that religion consists primarily in feeling. A thoughtful man may feel that an argument is fallacious, even though at the moment he is unable to put his finger on the fallacy; a good man feels that a proposed course of conduct is wrong, although he may not be capable of exposing the speciousness of a plausible plea in its behalf; a man of aesthetic appreciation feels that a picture is poor, although he cannot logically justify his disapproval; a trained critic feels that his favorite author

³ The Psychological Elements of Religious Faith, p. 24.

⁴ Poetry, Comedy, and Duty, p. 4.

⁵ Ibid., p. 41.

cannot have written a certain passage, although tradition may ascribe it to him and no objective considerations contradict. In such cases, and they might be multiplied indefinitely, judgment is passed on the ground of the "feel" of things, notwithstanding the absence of logical warrant or intellectual demonstration. In a word, there are two kinds of feeling, lying one on the hither, the other on the thither, side of thought.⁶ The first kind Dr. Everett calls emotion, undifferentiated feeling, but the feeling which properly deserves the name is that which transcends the intellect, although resting upon it. Here, again, is the dialectic: first, feeling which is mere emotion; then the discriminating intellect which stands over against the feeling, producing in theology the conflict between the heart and the head; and finally the higher synthesis in which feeling and reason are one. This suggests the approach to the identity from the side of reason.

In a valuable essay,⁷ Dr. Everett distinguishes between reason and reasoning, holding that the former is intuitive in character, while the latter is discursive and analytic.⁸ It is the familiar difference between the reason and the understanding, or the intellect. We say occasionally, it stands to reason that a thing is thus or so, and it will usually be found, when such a statement is made, that decisive logical proof is lacking. To say that something stands to reason is not the same as to say that it stands by reasoning. Now according to Dr. Everett, reason consists in the intuition that something is harmonious with, or inconsistent with, truth, goodness, or beauty; it does not wait on the analytic understanding; it may, and often does, hold its ground in spite of it, for it comes with a certainty which the understanding can neither give nor take away. It is indeed a feeling, but a feeling which is held trustworthy because one cannot help trusting it. Thus the conflict between Schleiermacher and Hegel

⁶ See essay on Instinct and Reason, in *Essays Theological and Literary*, pp. 157 ff., especially p. 169.

⁷ Reason in Religion, in *Essays Theological and Literary*, pp. 1-29. Cf. also *The Psychological Elements of Religious Faith*, pp. 145 ff.

⁸ "Reason is the faculty which discerns the inner unity." *Science of Thought*, p. 109. Cf. *Poetry, Comedy, and Duty*, p. 45. "The imagination gives us the Universe in its wholeness."

disappears before the three ideas of the reason which give reason its content and feeling, its distinguishing character for religion.

The use of the term "idea" as applied to truth, goodness, and beauty, may need brief explanation. It means not so much concept as form. The ideas of the reason are like the categories of the understanding; we may not be conscious of them as such, but we use them habitually, they underlie all our mental activity and are implicit in all its methods and conclusions. Perhaps this is as good a place as we shall find to point out a slight confusion attending Dr. Everett's use of these ideas. By truth he means unity,⁹ and the idea of truth is the universal and everlasting human tendency to reduce all things into order and system. Unfortunately, however, truth is used sometimes in this general sense and sometimes in the more specific sense of the operation of this unifying principle in the world of thought alone. It would not be unjust to Dr. Everett to say that with him the tendency to unity is the inherent principle of reason or spirit which shows itself in thought as truth, in social relations as goodness, and in feeling as beauty. There are obvious reasons why Dr. Everett did not make explicit this classification, chief among which perhaps was his feeling that classifications have more significance than is now commonly accorded them, but if we regard classification as a device for convenience, the scheme suggested will serve to make his meaning clearer and remove some intellectual embarrassments.

For example, the three ideas are usually treated as if they were equal and coördinate, nevertheless in *The Psychological Elements of Religious Faith* (p. 149) it is said that "Goodness and Beauty are really manifestations of Truth, so that ultimately we have the one innate idea, the first idea of the reason." Similarly in *Theism and the Christian Faith* (p. 183) he declares that "an analysis of the three ideas shows that the idea of unity is the basis of the others." Thus Dr. Everett seems to lay himself open to the criticism he himself had passed upon Schleiermacher for putting freedom, an outgrowth of the sense of dependence, upon the same plane with it—"to place these two elements (primary and secondary) on the same plane is not properly to define" (*The Psy-*

⁹ *The Psychological Elements of Religious Faith*, p. 131.

chological Elements of Religious Faith, p. 80). Furthermore, in his own discussion of freedom, he gives the idea of goodness veto power over the idea of truth, which would seem to exalt a secondary over the primary element. The riddle is read, however, when we realize that although unity is fundamental, it is known to us only through its manifestations in respective realms. The trinity is an economic trinity.

Returning now to the three ideas of the reason, we must repeat that they appear as modes of activity earlier than as definite concepts, else their universal inherence could not be maintained. "The truth of the matter appears to be that we come into the world with certain instincts of activity, bodily and mental, and a faith by which we follow these instincts, confident that they will not deceive or mislead us" (*Science of Thought*, p. 122, cf. *The Psychological Elements of Religious Faith*, pp. 42 ff., 153 ff.). Of course, a savage has no idea of vast systematic unity comprehending and systematizing all phenomena, the concept of a universe has not dawned upon him. Yet, to borrow one of Dr. Everett's apt illustrations, like the farmer who repudiated the idea that he wanted all the land there was, but confessed that he always coveted the field adjoining his, so the savage acts in such a way as to prove that the impulse towards all-embracing unity is present and operative within him. That he is animistic, indicates, first, that he seeks a cause for whatever sufficiently interests him to excite thought, and to seek a cause for anything signifies desire to take it out of its seeming isolation and bind it to something else (thus causation is an expression of that tendency towards unity), and, secondly,¹⁰ by supposing as cause a being like himself he is employing analogy, which, again, testifies to a constructive conviction of unity.¹¹ Thus, at the very beginning of mental life one finds evidence of the presence of this idea of unity as a form of activity. Similarly with goodness,¹² man at first has no theory of a social order which depends upon goodness and is its ultimate meaning, yet man is prone to act as a member of a

¹⁰ *The Psychological Elements of Religious Faith*, p. 163.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

¹² *The Psychological Elements of Religious Faith*, p. 185. *Science of Thought*, pp. 143 ff.

tribe or clan, even as there is a jungle-law which wild beasts unconsciously obey. A savage, likewise, shows the rudiments of aesthetic taste in his habit of adornment,—bad taste, to be sure, but bad taste is still taste,—and thus testifies to the presence of an aesthetic tendency.¹³ There is a somewhat wistful glance towards Darwin's theory of sexual selection, as if Dr. Everett would gladly carry love of beauty down into the lower orders, but his main concern is with man and the phenomena of human life. Man's experience, then, is determined by impulses inborn within him, and when later he comes to the state of reflection, and strives to read the meaning of his experience, he attains to the intellectual recognition of the principles upon which he has all along been acting, and the ideas of the reason become definite and conscious concepts.

It follows, then, that these ideas of the reason have not been given man from without. They are in his experience, but, like the categories of the understanding (which are only their specific applications) they are elements of experience contributed from within. That is to say, they are supernatural in character, for Dr. Everett uses the word "supernatural"¹⁴ to denote that which is non-composite. "By 'nature' [he says] we mean the universe as a composite whole, and by 'supernatural' the non-composite unity in and through which this composite whole exists; the supernatural is not a disturbing influence apart from and over against the natural, but the absolute unity which manifests itself in and through the diversity of nature" (*Theism and the Christian Faith*, p. 15). Here Dr. Everett aligns himself with those who virtually identify the supernatural and the personal. Objects in the material world are made up of atoms (so the theory ran before the atom became anachronistic), and can be disintegrated into their component parts, but man's impulse to unify cannot thus be compounded, since itself is present to effect the composition into unity of sensations and ideas. Goodness, too, is not the sum of acts, but reaches its perfection in love, which is a creative principle of conduct and hence an inner bond of unity. "The filthy rags of our own righteousness," Dr.

¹³ *Theism and the Christian Faith*, p. 181.

¹⁴ Cf. *The Psychological Elements of Religious Faith*, p. 89.

Everett used to say, "yes, our separated moralities are rags, and filthy rags, compared with the seamless robe of love in which is the life of the spirit." Goodness finds its fulfilment in love, which is more than goodness conceived as morality. Beauty, also, is not the product of analysis; we do not appreciate beauty by first evaluating the various parts of an object and then pronouncing the sum of the parts beautiful. On the contrary, beauty lies in the intuitive perception of the whole upon which the parts depend, and in its consummate form is the divination of a living presence animating nature with which man is capable of communion. Truth, goodness, beauty, then, these are supernatural elements in man, and religion consists in the feelings appropriate to these ideas when man believes himself in the presence of a supernatural being, of whom, because He is supernatural, these ideas are the manifestations. Or, to put it more concretely and accurately, because these supernatural elements are in man they are in the world also, and that man is incurably religious is the supreme testimony to their universal presence. And this leads us to a more detailed exposition of Dr. Everett's theology.

How can it be shown that these elements in man witness to their existence in the world beyond him? How can psychology pass over into theology? To this crucial question there are various answers, some of which must be mentioned. First of all, then, how do we know that there is anything beyond our own consciousness at all? Why should we not reduce all science to psychology, as some are inclined to do? But the fact is that man naturally and normally approaches the world in good faith;¹⁵ if he has certain sensations, he takes it for granted that there are objects, corresponding to those sensations, which carry for him the possibility of further experience. No man doubts the objective reality of things until he sips of the Pierian spring. Then the philosophical problem vexes him, the world of consciousness and the world of material things stand over against each other, and between the two is a great gulf fixed. When the question has once arisen, there seems to be no answer possible save a resort to the primitive good faith, which now, however, has

¹⁵ *Science of Thought*, pp. 122 ff.

become sophisticated and may be called simply faith. The intellect has raised a question it is incompetent to answer, but even in our deepest doubt we practically take the world in good faith, a convinced solipsist sets out to convert the world, and it is for philosophy to baptize at its font the primitive good faith of the child. But if we thus take our sensations at their face-value, if we trust our powers of perception, why may we not legitimately extend this good faith to cover all our experiences, and all our powers, including the religious? If we do think, and must think, in certain ways, why should we argue that because these forms are ours, they are therefore ours alone? Why not rather take it for granted, until the contrary has been proved, that they are ours because they pertain also to that larger world in which our lot is cast and with which our experience has to do? Thus, the good faith which gives us a world at all gives us also a world wherein truth, goodness, and beauty, are real as they are real in us.

And, secondly, this good faith finds confirmation in various ways. The fact that action dictated by the impulse to unity gives us the experience we ought to have if the mysterious world were indeed the home of unity, furnishes strong corroboration. Again, if man is really a part of this world then whatever is in him is also in the world, and, if we hold to the notion of evolution, it is but a natural inference that what is patent in man was latent in the world which has produced him as distinct but undivided part. Or, to put it otherwise, and more superficially, if these elements in man were not present in the world, then action dictated by them would put man out of harmony with his environment with disastrous results. The fact that in the world man, in whom these three ideas exist as modes of activity, has arisen, developed, and maintained himself, is good evidence in support of faith.

But with such answers Dr. Everett was not quite content, for, as has been said, he was most of all a philosopher and a metaphysician. We have these three ideas, our good faith in the world requires that it shall correspond to them, but how is such a world to be conceived? The world of space and time is not a world of unity, therefore the world of space and time cannot

meet our demands. Unity in space can be realized only when each finds itself in its other, unity in time when identity is preserved through the changes so that the present gathers up into itself the past. Then it is plain that only in the world of conscious spirit can the demand of unity find its realization. For the very nature of consciousness is to find oneself in the opposite, and only in memory does the past live and identity consist. If, then, we are to trust our tendency to unity,—and, be it observed, we do trust it in every moment of our lives and in every action whether instinctive or deliberate,—we must conceive of the world under the forms not of space and time but of conscious spirit. The world then is spiritual, even as man is spiritual, and only in absolute spirit does the ideal of unity find its fulfilment. Similarly with the ideal of goodness; with respect to goodness conceived as morality, there is an apparently irreducible antinomy, for if goodness have any reason beyond itself, it cannot be absolute, and if it have no such reason, it must be pronounced arbitrary and capricious; but this antinomy is resolved by the recognition that love is more than morality, and hence the second ideal of the reason leads us to conceive of the Absolute Spirit as “good and more than good,” even as perfect love. Finally, since beauty is the expression of the ideal in the actual, the thought of God as the Spirit manifest in all carries with it the conviction of the glory of God in an ordered creation. This is Dr. Everett’s form of the *a priori* argument; we cannot help believing in our ideal of unity, therefore we cannot help believing in Absolute Spirit which alone satisfies that ideal, without which indeed it could have no validity. Thus the three ideas of truth, goodness, and beauty, find their fulfilment only in the Absolute Spirit, in whom they are inherent and constitutive, even as they are in the finite human spirit. It follows, therefore, that whatever can be truly said concerning this Absolute Spirit must be in harmony with truth, goodness, beauty, and since the Spirit is one, even as the life of the tree is one with the life of the least and outermost leaf, whatever is consistent with these ideas in man may safely be attributed to God.

But this is a growing world, and man is a growing man;

his tendency to unity finds fulfilment in no system; his ideal of goodness has different concrete exemplifications from age to age and from race to race; his ideal of beauty creates one school of art after another,—are not these ideas, then, quite abstract and, because abstract, worthless? How, then, is it possible to reason from a man and a world in process to God? The answer is that our thought of God is and can be only a *Vorstellung*. But, indeed, all our ideas have both an individual and a universal element, and the latter always tends to burst the confines of the former. Because of this universal element, therefore, every idea is dynamic instead of static, our idea of God among the rest. Yet our idea of God may have the same value as other ideas, provided like them it is recognized only as an approximation destined inevitably to negate itself in the dialectic process toward a larger and truer thought.

Now, however, the deeper question comes, how this manifold world with its flux and change stands related to the One who is eternal. It is the old baffling problem—how out of the One has come the many, out of the changeless the changing, out of all-embracing truth individual error, out of perfection sin and suffering? It is in reality the problem of creation which Dr. Everett discusses at length and in detail. Without following the intricacies of the discussion, we may simply note in passing that Dr. Everett holds to what he describes as the philosophical, instead of the more common theological, view that creation is a manifestation of spirit and hence eternal, since of two antithetical terms one must be as real and as enduring as the other. Nevertheless, he insists with apparent inconsistency that “the gulf between the material world and the very germ of consciousness is absolute,” although in the next sentence he adds, “It is like a magnet,—a single grain of the magnetic stone will have its two poles with the absolute antithesis between them” (*Theism and the Christian Faith*, p. 159). But, in any event, this antithesis between matter and spirit involves the absolute dependence of the world upon God which satisfies all the interest that religion has in a theory of creation. Hence it follows that spirit is not abstract but of concrete fulness, the One does not cancel the many but includes the manifold con-

creteness, the imperfect is taken up as an element into the perfect. The world is a world of process just because of the immanent dialectic of spirit—if it were not a world of process it could not be a manifestation of Spirit, whose very being is life and process. The Hegelian insists that since goodness consists in victory over evil, there could be no goodness unless there were evil to be vanquished; consequently, so far from the presence of evil in the world being an objection to Theism, we could not believe in a good God in any other kind of a world. Dr. Everett demurs at this, holding that the possibility of evil would suffice for the argument, and not its actuality,¹⁶ but he does rest in the assurance that, since spirit is what it is, a world created by and dependent upon Spirit, its manifestation, must necessarily be a world of process. The only important question is whether the world reveals the supremacy of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

At this point in his unfolding thought, Dr. Everett introduces a discussion of evolution by natural selection. It is conceded that the method is of slight consequence, provided only the ideas of the reason appear as supreme. From what has already been said it is evident that the success of activity unwittingly dictated by the ideas, and, after conscious recognition and adoption of them, the firmer consistency and progressive enlargement of life loyal to their demands, amply satisfy the needs of his discussion. These facts also seem to prove the presence of a teleological principle in the world. "From the first nature has been an idealist. That is, the ideas which we claim, whether rightly or wrongly, are in some sense innate in the spirit, have been innate in nature itself . . . through the working of the material forces, these ideas have been the ruling principle to which the material world has been subject" (*Theism and the Christian Faith*, p. 186). It is manifest that from Dr. Everett's point of view it is absolutely essential that the world should disclose in its process the dialectic of spirit. The teleological principle must be exhibited. After arguing that ultimately there must be a choice between chance and teleology, Dr. Everett pleads that the present outcome of the

¹⁶ *Theism and the Christian Faith*, p. 260.

process is of such a character that chance must be pronounced an impossible explanation. Furthermore, he argues, to produce the unity which is the distinctive mark of spirit from the discreteness which is the distinguishing characteristic of matter, atomically considered, is an absolute inconceivability. Teleology, then, remains, although the care with which his statements on this subject are guarded is very noticeable. He will not speak of design, for that seems to him to go beyond the facts; he insists only upon a teleological principle, or impulse, in things having truth, goodness, and beauty, as final causes.

It is this teleological principle in the universe, conceived as the dialectic of the Spirit, which governs Dr. Everett's treatment of the more specific theological problems. This may be shown by reference to the discussions concerning hamartialogy and Christology. The question of Determinism falls under the first of these categories because of the assumption that moral responsibility depends upon individual freedom, so that unless some amount of freedom be acknowledged sin and salvation become meaningless terms. But the difficulty is to find enough freedom to enable man to become a sinner. After thorough discussion of the opposing arguments, in which, however, the argument for freedom based on consciousness is perhaps too summarily dismissed, the question is reduced to an antinomy between the first and the second idea of the reason; truth seems to demand a unity wherein freedom is impossible, but goodness requires individual initiative and responsibility. If this antinomy be irreducible, the assertion is that the idea of goodness must be held decisive, since in such matters the practical reason is more likely to be true than the theoretical,¹⁸ but an analysis of the meaning of freedom and our desire for it, leads to the recognition of an absolute freedom reconciling real and formal freedom. In so far as man is at one with the Absolute Spirit he has real freedom in the expression of inner purpose, and formal freedom because his will is at one with the will of God. And man has power to win or not to win this absolute freedom by the amount of earnestness he puts into life. "A man is under restraint everywhere; whatever the immediate sphere in which

¹⁸ Theism and the Christian Faith, p. 226.

he finds himself, he is bound by the laws of that sphere. But by greater earnestness of life, he may pass from one sphere into another. . . . The owner of a music-box cannot change its tunes, but he can determine which of those tunes shall be played. A man in a balloon is in a certain sense at the mercy of atmospheric currents, but these currents move in different directions at different heights, and the aëronaut can cause his balloon to rise or fall from one current to another" (*Theism and the Christian Faith*, p. 229).

Manifestly, this conclusion satisfies neither side in the great debate: indeed, the determinist may justly protest that it begs the whole question by assuming that man has power over his own earnestness, ability to rise from one level to another, if indeed the stratification appealed to is not completely subversive of the principle of unity. On the other hand, a believer in freedom may marvel that where any freedom at all is granted, and the contradictory principle so far denied, more freedom is not claimed. A modern aëronaut is by no means at the mercy of the air-currents. Our present business, however, is not to criticise but to expound, and from Dr. Everett's point of view it is plain that since the Spirit is onward-pressing, sin consists in failure to rise to ever higher levels of life. In a word, sin is inertia. Man's real being and destiny is to live and grow in obedience to the immanent Spirit, if he fail to respond to this inner impulse he is in a state of sin. Sin is regarded, therefore, as a state rather than an act, sins are but manifestations of this inert, unprogressive condition. It is negative, because it means the absence of the animating and directing principle which should be present. It is selfishness, because the Spirit which should prevail is universal, and by denying it man falls into the isolation of his merely individual interests. It is death, because in death the organism is at the mercy of the environment which disintegrates its unity, while life means the supremacy of a principle superior to the natural environment. From this it follows that the penalty of sin is deeper sin. "We find the complete punishment of sin only in sin itself, either a deeper sin or, if there is repentance, in the pain of struggle with which sin is relinquished" (*Theism and the Christian Faith*, p. 298).

In sin, therefore, there is a breach between man and the Spirit, a breach which religion has sought to heal in various ways, notably by sacrifice. But Christianity professes to close the chasm without the aid of sacrifice, and by its effect upon those who receive it amply justifies its claim. How, then, is the reconciliation accomplished by Christianity? The outcome of a rather disproportionately long discussion of the doctrine of the Atonement is that no theory can be considered Orthodox; that is, none has thoroughly and universally commended itself to the Christian consciousness; hence no particular theory can be deemed essential for the production of harmony, and, therefore, no doctrine of the atonement is essential. Dr. Everett's view is that since in the life of Jesus, and in his teaching concerning the fatherhood of God and the sonship of man, the teleological principle which is at the heart of all finds perfect expression, Jesus appeals persuasively to the spirit in every man, which when thus quickened effects the inner reconciliation.

Thus we are brought naturally to a consideration of Christ and Christianity. The discussion of the Trinity is rather surprisingly brief. Explicit reference is made only to the theories of Augustine, Shedd, and Dorner, of the last of which it is said: "If this is the doctrine of the Trinity, then every theist is a Trinitarian. But Dorner's statement does not satisfy the historical conception of the Trinity" (*Theism and the Christian Faith*, p. 325). Declaring that historically the doctrine was developed from a Scriptural basis, he goes on, with no careful canvassing of the evidence, to affirm that "the nearest approach to the New Testament position, considered as a whole, is found in the Arian doctrine" (*ibid.*, p. 326). The treatment of the doctrine of the Incarnation, by which is meant the dual nature of Christ, is even more unsatisfactory, but Dr. Everett's statement of his own view is clear and definite. Given a teleological principle in the world, we should expect to find prophetic personalities appearing in whom that principle finds more perfect expression than in the mass of mankind, who for this very reason become leaders of their fellows. Just because the spirit which is more abundant in them abides in the breasts of all men, these leaders are not alien to their kind, neither is their voice that of

a stranger. On the contrary, their presence and teaching sharpen and fortify the ideal which each man vaguely and dimly cherishes; therefore they lead by human right and by no official status. Such anticipative personalities one finds in all departments of life—they are the geniuses in art and letters, in science and state-craft. Such a man was Jesus in religion; in him the teleological principle in the world showed at what it had all along been aiming. Hence he is the leader of the race just because he leads (*Theism and the Christian Faith*, p. 361).

Moreover, Jesus came of the Hebrew race as the flowering of a long historical development. The more intimately therefore he is related to the process in the life and thought of Israel, the more evident it becomes that this national process is a replica, diminished to scale, of the process of the Spirit in humanity. That process is a process of revelation, consequently the unfolding of Hebrew history is revelation. In the Bible one finds the record of that revelation, which, as chronicling revelation, may itself also justly be deemed revelation, the more since its writers were men in whom the immanent teleological principle peculiarly resided. Hence Christianity, the religion of Jesus, being at once the consummation of the process in Israel and in humanity, is the Absolute Religion which can no more be surpassed than can the personality of its founder.

At this point one naturally asks, what is meant by Christianity—is it the religion of Jesus himself, or is it the religion which under widely different forms the world has called by the one name? Dr. Everett answers the question by emphasizing historic continuity. The Christian stream of influence proceeds from Jesus and, however many its affluents, still preserves its identity. It has proved the dominating power: influenced by the Mazdean religion, which next to the Jewish was the best embodiment among the religions of the world of the teleological principle, it nevertheless showed its preëminence by taking the influence up into itself instead of being absorbed by it. So reinforced, the stream received what was in harmony with its essential character and interpenetrated all with its transforming power. To say that Christianity is the absolute religion, however, does not mean that now or at any previous time it is or has

been perfect. That it is more perfect than any other religion known to us is affirmed as matter of fact, notwithstanding a popular prejudice against such a position,—a prejudice which amiably blurs all distinctions and cancels differences,—but it is argued that absoluteness does not imply perfection. Absoluteness, that is, consists in the fact that “it presents the sphere, it lays down the limits, within which development and progress are to take place, just as in the law of gravitation are laid down the limits within which the study of the heavenly bodies is to be pursued. Christianity is not perfect, but it contains within itself the possibility of an infinite development, which must however take place along the lines and in the direction that are indicated by it” (*Theism and the Christian Faith*, p. 345). That is to say, within Christianity is room for the perfect expression of all three ideas of the reason, which other religions of the world express severally and often in mutual opposition. There is unity in the doctrine of the interpretation of the human by the divine, goodness in the harmonious blending of religion and ethics in the perfection of love, beauty in the vision of the world as manifesting in ever-growing completeness an ideal life until its consummate exhibition appears in the personality of Jesus. It does not therefore follow that all will become Christian in name or that all religions will merge in Christianity. Whether or no that will be the event, time alone can determine. Yet in the universal and intuitive character of its principles, in the personality of its founder as an ideal for all lives and a symbol of the essential nature both of the religion and of humanity, and in the organization of the church, Christianity has advantages which make it improbable that any religion will surpass it.

From the whole character of Dr. Everett's thought his attitude towards immortality may be easily forecasted. After a terse but trenchant survey of the arguments for and against, he finds assurance of immortality in its compatibility with his general world-view. All along he has rested upon the Hegelian principle of the process from unity through differentiation into a higher, synthetic unity, and now the argument is that if the individuals in whom the Absolute has found manifestation

merely fall back again into the original unity, the process lacks its third and culminating stage, which is realized only if the individuals, as such, return to their source in the higher way of fellowship and love. This is but a more technical way of putting the argument from the theistic world-view. "I hardly understand how one who has real faith in God, can have serious doubt in regard to the immortality of the spirit. . . . If we grant the existence of God, then the fact that the individual is conscious of the divine life, and feels that his own life is rooted in it, makes the thought of immortality in one aspect easy if not necessary, while the fact that an infinite sphere is provided in which the spirit may dwell when severed from the material world, removes the difficulty of the belief in another aspect" (*Theism and the Christian Faith*, pp. 478-9).

Perhaps we may best review the course of Dr. Everett's thought by recapitulating the six definitions of religion which like milestones mark the stages of his advance. He begins with an inclusive and ends with a typical definition; the first is intended to include all phenomena that may properly be called religious, the last is designed to describe religion at its best. First, then, religion is defined as "feeling, or essentially feeling." Here he enters upon Schleiermacher's path, recognizing, however, that feeling can never exist wholly apart from thought and will, but insisting that in religion feeling takes the accent. But in defining the character of the feeling, he presents his second definition, "Religion is essentially feeling towards the supernatural." By the supernatural he means, as has previously been said, that which is non-composite. The savage does not worship the fetich as such, but rather the mysterious power akin to himself which is present in the fetich or somehow associated with it. A closer definition of the supernatural, leading to a discrimination between the supernatural considered negatively, as superstition, and positively, as religion properly so called, followed by a consideration of the various higher religions of the world (to which his course on comparative religion was devoted), yields a third definition, "Religion is essentially feeling towards a supernatural presence manifesting itself in Truth,

Goodness, and Beauty." At this point the lectures published in *Theism and the Christian Faith* take up the discussion, and by a profound study of the implications and requirements of these ideas of the reason justify substitution in the fourth definition of the word "spiritual" for "supernatural". Here he enters the broad highway of theological progress. In man spirit is partially and imperfectly manifest, but truth, goodness, and beauty in him testify to their perfection in absolute Spirit, wherein alone they are capable of full realization. This perfect Spirit is in the world as a teleological principle which has reached its consummate issue in the personality of Jesus. Hence we have the fifth definition, "Religion is essentially a feeling toward a spiritual presence manifesting itself in Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, especially as illustrated in the life and teachings of Jesus." Yet, inasmuch as the spirit that was in him is also in all, he is the first-born among many brethren, and in ever-increasing numbers men accept his way of life and approach his personality, realizing in themselves the universal spirit. Consequently we have the sixth and final definition, "Religion is essentially feeling towards a spiritual presence manifesting itself in Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, especially as illustrated in the life and teaching of Jesus and as experienced in every soul that is open to its influence."

One of the most brilliant among younger philosophical writers in America has recently referred to Dr. Everett as an "old-fashioned teacher." Although other pupils of Dr. Everett may resent the term, it must be conceded that it is not indefensible. He was old-fashioned in his manner of teaching. In his lectures there was no splutter of epigrammatic paradoxes, such as one hears from many teachers and writers of the modern school. His lectures moved with smooth and gentle flow, so evenly in fact that often his most important teachings seemed almost to slip from him casually, and the full import of his unemphasized sentences was not immediately discerned. Yet if wit was lacking there was often a touch of subtle humor so subtle that it frequently passed unnoticed at the time. It must be acknowledged, too, that in substance and method there was something which may fairly be called old-fashioned, now that

Hegelianism is out of vogue and the Absolute is almost everywhere spoken against. A great deal of water has flowed under philosophical and theological bridges since his thought took form. We hear of truth as expediency, of the mind as merely an instrument by which adjustments to environment may be more speedily and surely effected, of a pluralistic universe, and the like, all of which seems alien to his thought. Nevertheless, it is not so certain that there were not fundamental, if the term had not acquired other associations one would rather say radical, elements in his thought which are congenial with recent developments, and, perhaps one may be permitted to add, corrective of them. The most general description of the present philosophical movement would be to say that it has been from intellectualism to voluntarism, from the static to the dynamic view. It is true that in Dr. Everett's system the static quality often seems to predominate, but it is only in seeming, for his emphasis upon the teleological principle was constant, and the notion of process everywhere prevails. Perhaps if unity should be defined by the category of purpose (and such a definition would be essentially true to his thought), he might be more manifestly in harmony with present tendencies. One of his colleagues in the philosophical department of Harvard said soon after his death, that Dr. Everett seemed to him in a process of intellectual transition, and it would have been interesting to see whither a few more years of mental activity would have led him. It may be doubted whether there would have been any change in the creative principles of his thinking, indeed whether there would have been need of any. His recognition of the three ideals of the reason as modes of activity opens a most interesting vista along which, as he journeyed, he would have found many modern companions. Certain recent discussions of beauty, a subject to which he gave much attention, deeming it one of great significance too often neglected by theologians to the detriment of their science, read like Dr. Everett's thought translated into a different dialect and with new orientation. Upon this point, however, we cannot dwell here; it is enough to suggest that perhaps a studious reading of Dr. Everett will reveal that notwithstanding the "old-fashioned

habit of his mind" his thinking puts him among the moderns in philosophy.

A somewhat similar remark must be made about his theology. Dr. Everett was a Unitarian in his denominational relations. The fact is mentioned not merely because it is a fact but because I am sure he would have been glad to have it stated here, and because in existing circumstances, here in New England where he lived and taught, it has exceptional significance. Unitarianism in New England has already had two distinct phases of theological thought and seems about to enter upon a third. The earlier, pre-transcendental phase was rationalistic in character, but, largely through the influence of Emerson and others of the same way of thinking, the mystical elements which, as has recently been shown, were present in the thought of Channing, were vivified and came to the front, thus introducing the second phase of New England Unitarianism. When Dr. Everett began his theological career these two phases were coexistent and in antagonism, threatening to disrupt the fellowship. He recognized the opposition, but interpreted it as one of the antitheses in which his soul delighted. It was essentially a conflict between common-sense and mystical theology, and the bent of his mind was decisively towards the latter, and this although he expressly declares that the former has been represented by the Socinians and kindred schools, while the latter has been "more prominent in the so-called Orthodox belief of Christianity" (*Theism and the Christian Faith*, p. 18). In his emphasis upon the Spirit,—he was accustomed to declare the doctrine of the Holy Spirit the most significant doctrine of Christianity,—he was at one with the mystical school, and in his doctrine of the immanence of the Spirit as a teleological principle he exalted the reason of the rationalists into something higher and finer. It is not extreme to say that his own theological thought furnished the synthesis in which each of the elements in his own communion found its fulfilment. In the circumstances it was of inestimable benefit to Unitarianism that, in the non-denominational school where most of its ministers studied, the intellectual and personal influence of Dr. Everett was supreme. But his service was of much wider range. A prom-

inent Trinitarian Congregational clergyman of New England has said that he owes it to Dr. Everett that he became able to remain philosophically and sincerely a Trinitarian. On the other hand more than one pupil of Dr. Everett entered his classroom a Trinitarian and came out a Unitarian. But it should be added that in either case the Trinitarianism or the Unitarianism was of a peculiar type. This would seem to imply, what indeed is probably the case, that in Dr. Everett's theology there were principles which, carried to their fulfilment, mean a higher synthesis of religious thought in which Unitarian and Trinitarian may yet be at one.